temerity cost him his position at court, but that was because he had chosen an unfortunate time for his tirade. Kao Tsung, Tai Tsung, and Hsiian Tsung, the strongest monarchs of the dynasty, all sought to restrict the number of monks and nuns and to keep the religion under control. In 835 an imperial decree sought to prevent further ordinations of Buddhist monks. In 845 an Emperor who was a devoted Taoist issued an anti-Buddhist decree which is said to have led to the demolishing of more than forty thousand temples, the confiscation of temple lands, and the return to secular life of more than a quarter of a million monks and nuns. While these figures are quite probably an exaggeration. Buddhism undoubtedly was dealt a severe blow at a time when it had already entered on a slow decline.

On the other hand, none of these persecutions appears to have lasted any length of time, nor was any of them so severe as those which the early Christian church met In the Roman Empire or as some which Christians have inflicted on each other or Moslems on unbelievers. Probably the anti-Buddhist edicts were usually allowed quickly to become dead letters. Several rulers of the dynasty were ardent Buddhists, among them the great Wu Hou, •who for a short time had been in a nunnery and under whose rule Buddhist monks were very influential. Hsiian Tsung in later years was more favorable to Buddhism than an earlier decree of his against the faith would indicate, and his successor was a devout believer.

Buddhist literature continued to be produced. Not only were foreign authors translated but original works were produced in Chinese. The larger proportion of the T'ang activity in the realm of philosophy was not in Confucianism or Taoism,

but Buddhism. Whether in quality and originality Chinese Buddhist thought of the T'ang deserves to be ranked with the intellectual product of the Chou must be at present a matter of conjecture. Confucian scholars—to whom we of the West owe most of our knowledge of China's past—have usually had little understanding or appreciation of it. Modern scholarship is only beginning to delve into it. We may eventually discover that for profundity and acumen the best of Chinese Buddhist writers of the T'ang will bear comparison with the creators of the schools of the Chou,

Buddhism showed its vigor, too, by continuing to give birth to